

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled)

2. (Previously Presented) A contracting method to be used by a covenanter for making a contract for provision of a commodity or service, comprising the steps of:

receiving a question or a request for said commodity or service from a system of a covenantee who intends to conclude said contract through a network;

appending to a response to said question or request, in a system of said covenanter, a covenanter's electronic signature proving that said covenanter created said response;

CI sending said response containing said covenanter's electronic signature from the system of said covenanter to said covenantee through the network;

storing said response containing said covenanter's electronic signature in at least one system of said covenanter, said covenantee, and a third party; and

if said contract is concluded between said covenanter and said covenantee, creating, in at least one system of said covenanter, said covenantee and said third party, an electronic contract document bound to said response containing said covenanter's electronic signature with a data string

determined with regard to said response containing said covenanter's electronic signature, said electronic contract document containing said covenanter's electronic signature and a covenantee's electronic signature; and

storing, in at least one system of said covenanter, said covenantee and said third party, said electronic contract document bound to said response containing said covenanter's electronic signature.

C1 3. (Previously Presented) A contracting method as claimed in claim 2, wherein said response containing said covenanter's electronic signature includes said covenantee's electronic signature proving that said covenantee has agreed with said response.

4. (Currently Amended) A contracting method to be used by a covenanter for making a contract for provision of a commodity or service, comprising the steps of:

if a question or request for said commodity or service is received from a covenantee who intends to conclude said contract, outputting a response to said question or request to a system of said covenantee from a system of said covenanter;

_____ if the system of said covenanter obtains, in response to the response thus output, a new response containing an electronic signature of said covenantee from the system of said covenantee, thereby creating, in the system of said covenanter, an electronic contract between said covenanter and said covenantee about said contract, said electronic contract containing a covenanter's electronic signature and said covenantee's electronic signature;

making, in the system of said covenanter, said electronic contract document have correspondence relationships to new the response containing said covenantee's electronic signature by using a data string determined with regard to said new response containing said covenantee's electronic signature ; and

CI sending said electronic contract document from the system of said covenanter to the system of said covenantee.

5. (Previously Presented) A contracting method as claimed in claim 4, further comprising the step of:

appending, in the system of said covenanter, an electronic signature of said covenanter to the response to be outputted to the system of said covenantee.

6. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a person who accepts a commodity or service with the commodity or service, comprising the steps of:

sending a question or request for provision of said commodity or service to a provider for said commodity or service through a network;

receiving a response to said question or request from said provider through the network;

appending an electronic signature of said person who accepts said commodity or service to said response and then sending said response to said provider through the network;

storing said response with the electronic signature of said person who accepts said commodity or service appended thereto in at least one ~~of storage units~~ system of said provider, said person who accepts said commodity or service and a third party; and

if a contract for provision of said commodity or service is concluded between said provider and said person who accepts said commodity or service, making an electronic contract document on said contract have correspondence relationships to said response containing an electronic signature of said person by using a data string determined with regard to said response containing said person's electronic signature, said

electronic contract document containing an electronic signature of said provider and the electronic signature of said person, and storing said electronic contract document and said response containing the electronic signature of said person thus having the correspondence relationships in at least one system of said provider, said person and said third party.

7. (Previously Presented) A method for processing a contract to be used by at least one of concerned parties who make a contract for provision of a commodity or service and a third party, comprising the steps of:

CI creating a hash value of description data containing a description content about said commodity or service having been transferred between the concerned parties before concluding said contract and an electronic signature proving that both or either of the concerned parties has created or accepted said description content;

inserting said hash value in contract data containing said contract content therein;

appending respective electronic signatures of the concerned parties to said contract data containing said contract content and said hash value; and

storing said contract data containing said electronic signatures in at least one system of the concerned parties and said third party.

8. (Previously Presented) A system for processing a contract to be used by at least one of concerned parties who make a contract for provision of a commodity or service and a third party, comprising:

a processing unit for creating a data string determined with regard to description data containing a description content about a commodity or service and an electronic signature for providing that both or either of the concerned parties has created or accepted said description content, said description data having been transferred between the concerned parties about said contract before concluding said contract; and

another processing unit for making contract data have correspondence relationships with said description data by using said data string, said contract data including said contract content and respective electronic signatures of the concerned parties, and for storing said contract data and said description data thus having the correspondence relationships in a storage unit.

9. (Previously Presented) A system for processing a contract as claimed in claim 8, wherein said data string is a hash value of said description data.

10. (Previously Presented) A system for processing a contract as claimed in claim 8, wherein said data string is said description data per se.

✓ 11. Canceled.

C 12. (Previously Presented) A system for processing a contract as claimed in claim 8, further comprising another processing unit for making a description processing program for describing said contract content on an electronic contract document about said contract have correspondence relationships with said contract data.

13. (Currently Amended) A storage unit to be used by at least one of the concerned parties for making a contract for provision of a commodity or service and a third party, wherein said storage unit,

stores description data containing a description content about said commodity or service having been transferred between concerned parties about a contract before concluding said contract, said description data being created in both or either of systems of the concerned parties and containing electronic signatures of both or an electronic signature of either of the systems of the concerned parties about said description content; and

if said contract is concluded, stores contract data containing said contract content, said contract data being created in both or either of systems of the concerned parties and containing respective electronic signatures of the concerned parties about said contract content; and

both or either of the systems of the concerned parties making said description data and said contract data have correspondence relationships to each other by using a data string with regard to said description data.

14. (Previously Presented) A program sending device for sending a program for enabling a computer to execute a predetermined process to a network, said predetermined process comprising:

a process for creating data string determined with regard to description data containing a description content about a commodity or service having been transferred between concerned parties about a contract before concluding said contract and an electronic signature for proving that both or either of the concerned parties has created or accepted said description content, and

CI a process for making contract data containing a contract content about provision of said commodity or service and said description data have correspondence relationships to each other by using said data string, said contract data containing respective electronic signatures of the concerned parties, and for storing said contract data and said description data thus having correspondence relationships in a storage unit.


15. (Currently Amended) A recording medium for recording a contract processing program for enabling a contract processing system to execute a contract process for processing a contract for provision of a commodity or service, wherein said contract process comprises:

a process for creating contract data containing said contract content and a negotiating ID determined between concerned parties on said contract;

a process for retrieving, using said negotiating ID as a key, description data corresponding to said contract data from multiple description data containing a description content about said commodity or service having been transferred between the concerned parties about said contract before concluding said contract;

a process for inserting a data string determined with regard to said retrieved description data in said contract data; and

a process for ~~adding~~appending an electronic signature of at least one of said concerned parties to said contract data containing said data string.



16. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 15, wherein said process for inserting said data string is executed to insert said retrieved description data in said contract data as said data string.

17. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 15, wherein said process for inserting said data string is executed to calculate a hash value of said retrieved description data and to insert the hash value of said description data in said contract data as said data string.

18. (Original) A recording medium as claimed in claim 15, wherein said contracting process includes a process for determining whether or not either of the electronic signatures of said concerned parties added to said description data is correct and a process for adding the electronic signature of the other concerned party to said description data if the electronic signature of one of said concerned parties added to said description data is determined to be correct.

CI 19. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 15, wherein said contracting process further includes a process for describing said contract content on an electronic contract document on said contract and a process for inserting a data string determined with regard to a describing program for executing said describing process in said contract data.

20. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 15, wherein said contracting process further includes a process for inserting a contract content display template for creating from said contract content a contract content

display data to be outputted to an output unit in said contract data.

21. (Currently Amended) A recording medium as claimed in claim 15, wherein said process for appending a signature on said contract data is executed to append said electronic signature on said contract data if a permission for adding appending said electronic signature to said contract data is received.

C1 ✓ 22-26. (Canceled)

✓ 27-28. (Canceled)

29. (New) A method for processing a contract for provision of a commodity or service, comprising the steps of:
creating contract data containing said contract content and a negotiating ID determined between concerned parties on said contract;


C2 retrieving, using said negotiating ID as a key, description data corresponding to said contract data from multiple description data containing a description content about said commodity or service having been transferred

between the concerned parties about said contract before concluding said contract;

inserting a data string determined with regard to said retrieved description data in said contract data; and

appending an electronic signature of at least one of said concerned parties to said contract data containing said data string.

30. (New) A method as claimed in claim 29, wherein said step of inserting said data string inserts said retrieved description data in said contract data as said data string.



31. (New) A method as claims in claim 29, wherein said step of inserting said data string calculates a hash value of said retrieved description data and inserts the hash value of said description data in said contract data as said data string.


32. (New) A method as claimed in claim 29, further comprising the step of determining whether or not either of the electronic signatures of said concerned parties appended to said description data is correct, and

wherein said step of appending an electronic signature appends the electronic signature of the other concerned party to said description data if the electronic signature of one of said concerned parties appended to said description data is determined to be correct.

33. (New) A method as claimed in claim 29, further comprising the steps of:

describing said contract content on an electronic contract document on said contract; and

inserting a data string determined with regard to a describing program for executing said describing process in said contract data.



34. (New) A method as claimed in claim 29, further comprising the step of inserting a contract content display template for creating from said contract content a contract content display data to be outputted to an output unit in said contract data.

35. (New) A method as claimed in claim 29, wherein said step of appending a signature appends said electronic

signature on said contract data if a permission for appending said electronic signature to said contract data is received.

36. (New) A system for processing a contract for provision of a commodity or service, comprising:

a module for creating contract data containing said contract content and a negotiating ID determined between concerned parties on said contract;

a module for retrieving, using said negotiating ID as a key, description data corresponding to said contract data from multiple description data containing a description content about said commodity or service having been transferred between the concerned parties about said contract before concluding said contract;

a module for inserting a data string determined with regard to said retrieved description data in said contract data; and

a module for appending an electronic signature of at least one of said concerned parties to said contract data containing said data string.

37. (New) A system as claimed in claim 36, wherein said module for inserting said data string inserts said retrieved description data in said contract data as said data string.

38. (New) A system as claimed in claim 36, wherein said module for inserting said data string calculates a hash value of said retrieved description data and inserts the hash value of said description data in said contract data as said data string.

39. (New) A system as claimed in claim 36, further comprising:

a module for determining whether or not either of the electronic signatures of said concerned parties added to said description data is correct; and

a module for appending the electronic signature of the other concerned party to said description data if the electronic signature of one of said concerned parties appended to said description data is determined to be correct.

40. (New) A system as claimed in claim 36, further comprising:

a module for describing said contract content on an electronic contract document on said contract; and

a module for inserting a data string determined with regard to a describing program for executing said describing process in said contract data.

C2 41. (New) A system as claimed in claim 36, further comprising a module for inserting a contract content display template for creating from said contract content a contract content display data to be outputted to an output unit in said contract data.

42. (New) A system as claimed in claim 36, wherein said module for appending a signature on said contract data appends said electronic signature on said contract data if a permission for appending said electronic signature to said contract data is received.
